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ABSTRACT

Children's language abilities develop in a predetermined order, one stage necessarily preceding the next. The rate of this development remains relatively the same for physiologically normal human beings. Through research it is becoming possible to identify critical periods in linguistic development. Teachers could utilize and exploit these growth rhythms by presenting language concepts that the student would be susceptible to at a particular time. Research results support not a preplanned program of instruction, but a flexible teaching strategy in which the teacher uses his knowledge of the developmental sequences to urge students along in the directions in which growth has been indicated. The main role of the teacher would be to provide occasions for pupils to use their developing language in ways which are appropriate to their level of maturity. Literature curricula should also correspond to levels of student language maturity in terms of dominant themes. The study group's responses, prompted by Whitehead's paper, are included. (LL)

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WORKING PARTY PAPER NO. 2

What is "Continuity" in English Teaching?

by

Frank Whitehead

In the teaching of any subject area, the demand for an ordered sequence which is widely accepted arises naturally from our existing patterns of school organisation. When the same children are taught at successive stages by different teachers, there is an undeniable need for co-ordination to avoid wasteful overlap and repetition, unintended gaps and omissions, confusingly different approaches and terminology. (In British secondary schools, for example, teachers can be heard complaining that their pupils have been mis-taught English grammar in the primary school or have already "done" at age nine books and poems which are designated as part of the syllabus for twelve or thirteen year olds.) Moreover, the increased geographical mobility of employment characteristic of a modern industrialised economy makes it increasingly desirable that the sequences prevailing in different parts of a country should be, if not identical, at least compatible.

Even so, most British observers are surprised by the extent to which discussion of English curriculum reform in the U.S. in the past few years has been obsessed by the search for an agreed framework which would be "sequential," "cumulative," "incremental," "articulated," and "structured." Thus in 1958 the Basic Issues Conference described as "crucial" the question: "Can basic programmes be devised that are sequential and cumulative from the kindergarten through the graduate school?" This pre-occupation was clearly intensified as a result of the Woods Hole Conference of 1959, even though the latter was oriented primarily towards education in the sciences

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and included no English specialist among its participants. The most influential aspects of Bruner's (1960) report have been (a) the view that "the curriculum of a subject should be determined by the most fundamental understanding that can be achieved of the underlying principles that give structure to that subject" and (b) the suggestion that we can anticipate "readiness for learning" in our pupils by introducing to them at an early age "the great and simple structuring ideas" and later returning to these ideas in progressively fuller form as part of the "spiral curriculum."

In the teaching of scientific subjects (where the "structuring ideas" are the generalising abstractions which give order and meaning to empirical observations) this approach has proved highly effective; and it is understandable if teachers of English hanker after the intellectual prestige which might accrue from its application to their own concerns.

Can the concept of structure, however, be applied to the "subject" of English in anything more than a loosely metaphorical sense? There is already a good deal of elasticity in Bruner's use of his key term, since the logico-deductive structure of an "artificial language" such as mathematics is something very different indeed from the "structuring ideas" of an empirical science. When the term is extended to language learning, the "structure" can only be that of the complexly interwoven patternings discernible in the speech-habits of a given language-community, patternings which are normally operated quite unconsciously by a speaker of his mother-tongue, and which must indeed <u>become</u> unconscious in the learner of a second language before he can begin to use it with anything approaching

effectiveness. Though Bruner did not himself throw out any hints in this direction, attempts have been made to develop a linguistically-based English curriculum in which the sequence derives either from the structural patterns identified by descriptive linguistics or from the so-called "deep structure" hypothesised by transformational-generative grammarians; the fundamental objection to such attempts will emerge at a later stage in my argument.

Far more influential have been the numerous attempts to derive a sequential curriculum from "the basic principles of structure in literature" (variously defined). A useful survey by Walker (1966) brings out a persisting lack of agreement as to the nature of these basic principles. On the one hand there are those whose search is directed towards the different literary forms or genres and the internal relationships characteristic of these forms. On the other hand there are those who busy themselves in looking for the "basic recurring themes," the "main archetypes" or the "major fundamental awarenesses" which constitute the experience of literature.[1] In regard to the former approach we can probably all

1. This quest has a history going well back. In 1942, for example, Thomas Clark Pollock put forward as a guide for the teacher selecting literary works for study "three major themes" which "form the dominant pattern" in the Anglo-American cultural tradition. These were a belief in the worth and dignity of the individual human being, a belief that the highest development of human personality is to be found in self-sacrifice and service to others, and "a belief that life is essentially good and should be faced with hope and courage as a high adventure." Using this criterion it might be a mildly entertaining parlour game to draw up lists of the great writers who would be "out" and the Martin Tuppers who would be "in."

agree that conscious awareness of formal characteristics (e.g. rhythm, imagery, dramatic irony, narrative point-of-view) should play some part in a student's literary education, at any rate at the older ages and more advanced levels of study. From the British standpoint what may well be in dispute is the magnitude of the contribution that can be made by such awareness to the reader's ability to respond fully and appropriately to any specific literary work. Many British teachers certainly believe that for younger and for less able pupils conscious direction towards such issues can be a hindrance and a distraction because it seemingly offers them a relatively painless alternative to the task of reading the novel, poem, or play as such. In a rather similar way, the great disadvantage of the second approach (that via "themes") is that it leads our attention away from the unique work of literature towards those features which, when abstracted from it, can be seen to link it, in one way or another, with other works. This seems to me calculated to produce knowledge "about" literature (probably spurious knowledge at that) rather than a capacity to read works of literature and respond to them; and it is surely incompatible with our shared conviction that the value of literature as "a maturer of humanity" is "the sum of a continuous experiencing of books" (Heilman, 1956). At its worst, this approach will foster the disposition to see, for example, novels not as individual and self-contained works of art (each with its own reasons for being so and not otherwise) but as variant and interchangeable treatments of "a relatively limited number of human plights" (Bruner, 1960). Nor can I see that anything valuable

has been achieved when the student has been taught to perceive a resemblance between the plot structure of a Shakespeare comedy and that of a "battered television movie," or between the character of Anna in The King and I and Alice in Lewis Carroll's Wonderland (Frye, 1964, pp. 115 and 123-124). What one has to ask is "Do these perceptions enable him to take anything more from his reading of Shakespeare or Carroll?"; and the answer, on the most charitable interpretation, can only be "Precious little."

It should be added that various (not very logical) attempts have been made to combine the two approaches I have just outlined (see for instance Design for Learning, ed. Frye, 1962). Of these the one which comes nearest to intellectual coherence is the "four-layer description of the structure of literature" offered by Dwight Burton (1964);[2] even this falls, in my view, some distance short of being either convincing or demonstrably helpful to the teacher.

To the outside observer, then, the attempt to derive a rational sequence for the teaching of English from the internal structure of the

2. The layers are:
   Layer 1. Themes which develop from four basic relationships: man and deity; man and other men; man and nature; man and himself.
   Layer 2. Modes, of which there are four basic ones according to the eminent critic Northrop Frye: romantic, comic, tragic, and ironic. Romantic and comic modes, Frye maintains, are the easier; tragic and ironic, the more difficult.
   Layer 3. Genres, of which the modern imaginative ones are novel, short story, poem, and play.
   Layer 4. The individual selection.

subject as studied at its highest level seems open to three major objections. In the first place, there is no body of agreement as to the nature of this structure, nor does any such agreement seem attainable; it is not even clear whether it should be looked for within the discipline of literary criticism or that of linguistics. Secondly, the search for "structure" as a guiding principle leads to a retrogressive emphasis upon "knowledge" (knowledge about the language, or about literature) as opposed to "ability to use." And thirdly, the desire for a step-by-step articulation of sequence leads (as is made explicit in Hook, 1962) to a demand that the English teacher's field of activity be restricted to that which can be made incremental - and hence to the exclusion of many of those vital but untidy human concerns which the good teacher of English instinctively feels to be part of his professional responsibility.

Perhaps then we need to look in a different direction. English after all is unique as a school subject because its role, essentially, is to foster, improve and refine the individual's ability to use his mother-tongue - to use it fully, flexibly, effectively, sensitively, and to use it for all the varied purposes which one's native language must serve in a modern civilised community. (Literature falls within this province because the creative and imaginative uses of language are an integral part of the life-experience of a civilised human being.) Given this, I suggest that we must look for our source of order to the inherent and inescapable sequence in the acquisition of a man's mother-tongue, a developmental pattern whose origin and momentum come from outside the

school situation, and which is intimately bound up with the individual's whole intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual growth. To lay the emphasis thus on the human developmental sequence is not, however, to diminish the role of those who "know the subject most deeply": we must draw on their insight and expertise to interpret the potentialities of the pupil's growth processes at any given stage, to perceive whither his abilities, interests and needs are tending, and how they can be nurtured most fruitfully.

There can be little doubt that, in broad terms, children's language abilities do develop in a pre-determined order, one stage necessarily preceding the next. A child must listen and hear language used by others before he can talk himself; he utters single words before he produces the multiple-word utterances we usually call sentences; under normal circumstances he requires a fair degree of facility in talking before he can learn to read; and so on. Moreover we expect him to enjoy nursery rhymes, folk tales (and/or comic strips) before he enjoys Treasure Island or Hamlet. The fact that different children pass through the sequence at very different rates is not a vital objection to our argument. In all physiologically normal human beings the order of the stages of linguistic development remains very much the same; and it is this orderliness that gives point to our continued use of the much-abused terms "maturation" and "readiness." At the same time, it must be remembered that language is a social activity; it is learned, essentially, through linguitic interaction with other human beings. There are almost certainly thresholds of sensory discrimination or muscular co-ordination which form a necessary

prerequisite for certain stages of language growth, but once the early stages are passed these seem to play a relatively minor part in determining the sequence. Far more decisive are the amount and quality of the linguistic experience provided by the child's social environment, the relationships he forms with other people, and the pressures from within which move him to use language to satisfy his human needs. For this reason it may often be peculiarly difficult to distinguish between those aspects of the observable sequence which are tied to a particular environment and those regularities which seem to be inescapable in all the cultures and communities we know of. Despite this area of uncertainty, it is surely good sense for educators to work with the discernible patterns of linguistic development, seeking to expedite progress where this is practicable, but in general utilising and exploiting the existing growth rhythms rather than ignoring them or trying to ride rough-shod over them. Relevant, moreover, to the soundness of this strategy is the accumulating evidence for the occurrence in human, as in animal, growth of "critical periods" when the organism is particularly susceptible to specific kinds of stimulation.

What kinds of structure, then, might this approach provide for our English curriculum? There are several different levels on which a child's linguistic growth-sequence may be described, but it will be convenient to distinguish broadly between those concerned with the recurring patterns inherent in the language he uses and those concerned with the uses he makes of this language in varying "contexts of situation." There have

been numerous studies of the internal characteristics of children's language at different ages, the pre-school age having been treated more extensively than any other, though much of the earlier work (reviewed at some length in McCarthy, 1954) was seriously weakened by the use of inadequate or even amateurish linguistic categories. Unquestionable is the fact (often commented on) that the child has learnt a remarkably high proportion of the structure of his native language before he enters school, and has learnt it without any deliberate educational intervention.

Thus at the level of phonology, where the developmental sequence has been rather fully recorded by Templin (1957), three-quarters of all children can produce more than 80 percent of the phonemes of the language with reasonably correct articulation by the age of six, and mastery of the remaining (comparatively rare) consonant sounds is achieved by age eight. (As Hockett, 1950, has put it, the child's early speech exhibits a phonemic system which, though functional, is more imprecise and less fully developed than that of the adult, and which is progressively differentiated and refined by splits and contrasts: it is perhaps worth noting that the child's ability to analyse words consciously into their sound-components develops decidedly later than his ability to produce them accurately (Bruce, 1964).)

At the twin levels of morphology and syntax there is also good agreement that children normally possess virtually all the structures of their native language by the time they enter compulsory schooling;

as Smith (1956) put it, "the important fact is that about 98 percent of all our speakers [illegible] in full control of the structure of their group's communicative systems at about the same age (viz. about 5½)." Berko (1958) presented convincing evidence for this in regard to morphology; and more recently Menyuk (1963), using Chomsky's model for linguistic analysis, reached a similar conclusion with regard to both the phrase-structure level and the transformation level. At these levels all the basic structures used by adults to generate their sentences were also found in acceptable form in the speech both of nursery school children and of first-grade children; and although some forms restricted to a children's grammar were also observed at both ages, the occurrence of these unique forms was, relatively, very infrequent. Menyuk did, however, find indications that at the transformation level further significant changes occur beyond the age of seven years. Hunt (1964) has presented interesting evidence based on a study of pupils' writing at the fourth grade level, eighth grade level, and twelfth grade level. He found that almost all structures were used by even the youngest writers, but that the older students used with significantly greater frequency many of the structures produced by sentence-combining transformations. Does this provide a loophole for those who wish to argue in favour of teaching generative grammar over these grade levels as a means of helping pupils

to write better?[3] I think not. Certainly, since the transformations are all within the repertoire of all grades, there can be no justification from the developmental sequence for locating the study of them at any particular stage or for presenting them in any particular order. And there remains (as Hunt himself very properly points out) the even more fundamental doubt as to whether conscious awareness of such structures (which are ordinarily used unconsciously) plays any significant part in one's ability to employ them to good effect at the right moment. Is it not the case that we use more complex sentences as we grow older because the thoughts and feelings within us which are clamouring for expression have become more complex or more complexly inter-related? And should not our teaching start therfore from the cause rather than the symptom?

On the other hand at the next level, that of lexis, there is certainly evidence of continuing development throughout the school years. Admittedly, the experimental studies in this field have been bedevilled by the difficulty of deciding what one means firstly by a "word" and

3. Cf. Bateman and Zidonis (1965), who claim that a year's teaching of generative grammar to ninth-graders produced a significant improvement in students' ability to produce in their writing "well-formed sentences of greater structural complexity." Apart from the notorious uncertainty (popularly known as "the Hawthorne effect") which attends any comparison of teaching methods between an experimental group and a control group, it must be pointed out that, even if mature writers use more well-formed complex sentences, it does not necessarily follow that writing containing more well-formed complex sentences is either more mature or more worth reading. One would need to see wider criteria used in comparing the writing of the two groups.

secondly by "knowing" a word. All the same, a child's active vocabulary has been shown to expand from several hundred words at age two and three to several thousand at age five and six, while Smith (1941) and Templin (1957) have recorded a continuing expansion of children's recognition vocabulary from age six onwards, and, in the study by Smith, right up to age seventeen. At first sight this may appear to give warrant for a planned incremental programme of vacabulary-building by the English teacher over these years. Look, however, at the magnitude of the increment which accrues as part of the normal growth sequence: if we ignore derived words and confine the count to "basic words" (i.e., dictionary items), this amounts, according to Smith, to an average of more than 2,500 words a year over the ten-year period. Clearly it will always be well-nigh impossible for any teacher to decide beforehand which words need to be learnt at a given stage by any particular pupil; nor can we conceive of any programme of vocabulary lessons which could make more than a marginal and negligible impact compared with the incidental learning which takes place anyway as a result of conversation, television-watching, and reading. Surely what is needed here is not deliberate teaching, but rather a planned effort to maximise the activities which give rise to this incidental learning.

One final level of structural description needs to be mentioned- that relating to the larger structural organisation of the paragraph or sequence of paragraphs. I have not come across any studies of developmental sequence at this level; nor, I think, do we know very much about

the effectiveness of all the teaching about Topic Sentences which has played so large a part in composition lessons in both countries ever since the mid-nineteenth century. My own guess is that inductive observation of the paragraph organisation of good writers has a limited usefulness from about age fifteen or sixteen onwards--but not earlier. In the absence of any solid evidence for this view, I will content myself with quoting from Roberts (1960) a comment which seems to me sensible:

> When we say that a paragraph ought to be unified and coherent and meaty, we have said about all there is to say. The means of achieving unity, coherence and meatiness are infinite beyond description. It seems to me perfectly obvious that nobody ever pauses in the heat of writing to think about Topic Sentences or Methods of Paragraph Development. Nobody, unless he is doing an exercise for a composition class, ever asks himself, "Now what would be a good topic sentence for this one?" or ever reflects, "I organized the last paragraph inductively, so I think I had better try a comparison-and-contrast this time."

In general it seems to me that, as far as the internal characteristics of children's language are concerned, the developmental evidence points, not to a pre-planned programme of instruction, but rather to a flexible teaching strategy in which the teacher uses his greater sensitivity and wider perspectives to nudge his pupils along in the directions in which they are already moving. The teacher needs to have present in his own mind a map of the developmental sequences I have outlined, so that he may know when to nudge, and in what direction; but his main role is to arrange plentiful and varied occasions for his pupils to use their developing language in ways which are appropriate to their level of

maturity, and for purposes which involve them deeply so that the consequent incidental learning takes root and stays with them.

What kinds of use, though? Are some kinds of use appropriate only for certain stages? Here we move into an aspect of the developmental sequence (the "context of situation" level, to use J.R. Firth's terminology) which has been little studied. I shall try only to sketch three main dimensions of growth which I think most teachers will recognise as meaningful to their own experience.

In the first place, a young child's use of language, considered on this level, is of limited range and flexibility. He makes little attempt to vary his discourse to suit the audience, the situation, or the particular purpose he has in hand;[4] on the whole he has little need to, since his audience is for the most part the small family groups whose members are ready and willing to make all the necessary allowances. His speech at this stage is perhaps best thought of as an undifferentiated matrix out of which will eventually emerge many highly specialised language-functions. For once he begins to move outside the circle of

4. One aspect of this was first called to attention by Piaget (1926). His exemplifications of his much-disputed term "egocentrism" were confusing, however, and proved difficult to substantiate. More recently Church (1961) has redefined egocentrism as "embeddedness in one's own point of view without any awareness that one has a point of view rather than an instantaneous, unlimited, exhaustive, and infallible grasp of reality as it actually is." In so doing he makes it possible to relate illuminatingly the linguistic manifestations to a more general psychological trait which is particularly characteristic of immaturity, though it persists to some extent in adults as well.

his family and immediate neighbourhood, he will find himself obliged to adapt his vocabulary, accent, syntax, and style to match a whole range of differing audiences and social contexts. He must learn the conventions which distinguish the written from the spoken forms of language; and he must learn ultimately to vary the mode or "register" of his writing to suit many diverse purposes (expository, narrative, persuasive, poetic, scientific, and so forth). It is certainly important that the teacher should help along this increasing diversification and differentiation; but here again I believe the objective is best achieved by providing an increasingly wide range of highly specific situations, audiences and purposes which will compel the student to shape his writing to their needs. The "modes of discourse" and the "social registers" are not something to be learnt as precepts and then applied; they should be held, rather, in the teacher's mind as a map parcelling out the ground that needs to be covered.

The second dimension of growth which we can surely trace in our pupils is that represented by an increasing ability to handle abstractions. Obviously in this respect linguistic growth is closely tied up with concept-formation, a process which has been extensively studied in recent years (see the review of research in Wallace, 1965). Of course, when a young child first acquires language, he is at the same time sorting out his experience into categories, and this process may be said in some sense to imply an abstracting of the essential features which characterise a given class of objects: a toddler will recognise a

greyhound as a dog even though previously he has seen only dachshunds and terriers. But this seems to be accomplished purely at the perceptual level of mental functioning without any accompanying ability to name the distinguishing features mad use of; and as Church (1961) has pointed out, the same is true of the downward categorisation observable in the language-learning of the preschool child, whereby poorly defined categories are continually subdivided into more precise ones. What we are interested in at the moment is rather the upward categorisation of perceptually dissimilar things which have never previously been considered the same: the realisation, for instance that "although human beings and cattle are in some ways very different, they share traits that mark them both as mammalian organisms" (Church, 1961). This appears considerably later in development, is necessarily a symbolic operation, and involves the acquisition of new types of hierarchic mental organisation. Piaget and others have presented an impressive amount of evidence to suggest that this kind of abstract thinking develops considerably later than educators have tended to assume. According to Piaget, the stage of "formal operations" (i.e., symbolic thinking which is no longer bound to the concrete here and now) begins on the average at about eleven or twelve years of age; and although massive experience evidently plays a large part, there is doubt whether deliberate teaching can significantly accelerate the transition to it. Research currently in progress in this field may have important implications for the kind of topic we expect our pupils to talk and write about at given ages. One caveat should be entered, however. Piaget himself often writes as though the

attainment of logical abstract thought is the sole objective towards which all human development tends. Perhaps as English teachers we need to re-assert that, for all its importance, this is only one of the dimensions of human growth; even after they have developed the ability to think abstractly, our adolescents and our young adults will still need continuing experience of using their language concretely in the mode of the poet or the story-teller or the autobiographer.

The third dimension of growth which seems relevant relates to the young person's capacity for critical assessment, both of what he reads and of his own writing. To some degree a child's response to what he reads contains from the beginning a reaction for or against, a decision to accept or reject; but until well on into adolescence these reactions are intuitive, impermanent, and intensely personal. What I have in mind here is the gradual development of a stable core of more sustained discriminations around which new judgments come to be organised, together with a readiness to examine in a more distanced and thoughtful way the grounds on which it may be possible to justify such judgments to others. On this view the essential element in critical reading is its evaluative aspect; the acquisition of a critical terminology, a vocabulary for analysis, has importance not as an end in itself, but as a means towards the objectively shared comparison of responses which must always in the last analysis be personal if they are to be anything at all. The stage at which critical assessment can enter explicitly into the practice of the classroom will need careful discussion;

there is much disagreement here, and, perhaps, a certain amount of muddled thinking.

The three dimensions of growth just mentioned can be traced in both the spoken and the written English of our pupils. They apply, moreover, to the productive uses of language (talking and writing) as well as to the receptive (listening and reading). It is perhaps worth recalling that for some time now all good teaching of reading has been articulated by a sequence of "stages" first elaborated some forty years ago (N.S.S.E., 1925; N.S.S.E., 1937; Gray, 1956). This sequence was described somewhat unsystematically, mixing together levels which we now find it preferable to keep distinct; it is not always easy to determine whether its details belong to a particular set of teaching methods or to an inherent and universal developmental pattern; and it needs to be integrated more closely with the overall linguistic development of which it forms only a part. Nevertheless, it has played a valuable role, and it should now be improved and fitted into a wider perspective rather than discarded.

Finally I must refer, briefly and inadequately, to those specialised yet centrally important uses of language which we refer to as literature. In our dealings with literature, I believe that we instinctively do, in fact, all work on the assumption that there exists in our students a developmental sequence in this area of language-use just as much as in any other. Along what dimensions might it be possible to describe this sequence? The formal levels of linguistic growth already discussed

must, of course, enter in here too; in assigning books or poems to particular grades or age-levels, we naturally take into account the complexity of their vocabulary and of their syntactic structures. Are there in addition particular literary devices or stylistic features which cannot be appreciated below a particular age or stage? I am inclined to doubt this. From a very early age children respond to verbal rhythm and to incremental repetition, while even the youngest listener will take delight in the dramatic irony of the wolf's replies to Red Riding Hood. It is true that figurative language can often prove an obstacle, but this seems to be the result, not of an inherent incapacity for metaphor, but rather of the limited store of associations which the young reader has available to draw upon. Certainly we should expect our pupils, as they grow older, to respond more sensitively to the literature they read and to recreate for themselves with greater accuracy and subtlety the precise patterning of experience which the writer has embodied in the verbal organisation of his novel or poem; the discovery of how rewarding it may be to look again at an image, a sentence, a verse, or a paragraph to correct and amplify an inadequate or mistaken first impression is perhaps the most important lesson any student can take from our literature teaching. And to some degree, no doubt, this increasingly fine and delicate responsiveness may be helped along in its later stages by explicit discussion of what is contributed to the total meaning of a given work by some specific technique. But as I have argued elsewhere, "knowing how the writer has gained his ef-

fects" is not the same thing as "being able to experience these effects as fully as possible"; and I suspect that there are all the world over too many teachers who are ready to concentrate on teaching about literary forms and techniques as if this were a form of knowledge worth having for its own sake.

A more fruitful line of approach is to look at the kinds of experience which young readers can take, with benefit to themselves, from their reading of literature at different stages. There have been numerous studies in both our countries of the types of book which children of different ages choose to read of their own free will. Admittedly, few of these studies are really up-to-date, so that we still have far too little objective knowledge about the impact of the television era upon children's reading; moreover, their findings need to be treated with some reserve, partly because of certain methodological defects and partly because it has repeatedly been shown that what children read depends more upon what is readily available to them than upon any other single factor. When their limitations have been allowed for, these studies can nevertheless prvide useful guidance as to the themes and experiences which make a strong appeal to children at different stages in their development. One conclusion enforced by a number of different studies is that the younger children are, the more they are inclined to seek in their reading vicarious satisfactions of a relatively undisguised wish-fulfilment kind, obtained by a process of identification with a hero or heroine not too unlike themselves. Related to this is Friedlaender's

(1942) opinion that children turn particularly to books which mirror the phantasies and emotional conflicts which belong to their own stage of development, and that the instinctual gratification which such books supply has the function of helping the child to deal with these inner conflicts and achieve a resolution of them. It may be suggested, then, that progress towards maturity in literary experience is partly a matter of changes in the dominant themes that can be approached (there are certain ages below which we do not expect young people to appreciate Donne's Songs and Sonnets, Wordsworth's nature-poetry, or King Lear), and partly a matter of growth in the capacity for objective and de-personalised response.

If, however, we try to base our literature curriculum on a developmental sequence of this kind, can the attempt be reconciled with our wholly proper concern for quality and literary standards? There is a fundamental division here between two points of view: on the one hand those for whom the teacher's role is to present and make attractive "good literature," selecting, condensing, diluting or adapting it in whatever ways are necessary to make it acceptable to his pupils; on the other hand those who see his task as that of guiding his pupils' reading in such a way that their immature likes and dislikes are gradually changed for the better. The dilemma is a real one. More than one study (e.g., Shuttleworth, 1932; Whitehead, 1956) has revealed that in their judgment of books children are rather little influenced by literary merit and aesthetic values. Apparently, it is not so much that they

are actively hostile to the qualities which cultivated adults value in literature; rather it is that they are relatively indifferent as to whether or not these qualities are present, since what they look for in their reading is the satisfaction of their own pressing emotional and instinctual needs. On the other hand, it should be remembered that these investigations of children's preferences and judgments were concerned with groups and could therefore disclose only average trends. There is a need for extended longitudinal studies of the changing tastes of individual children to establish the specific circumstances which favour improvement in the quality of young people's reading preferences. Suggestive in this context is Squire's (1964) finding that readers who have become extensively involved in stories are more inclined to make comments which evaluate their literary qualities. Whichever conception of the teacher's role is adopted, it is certainly essential that his guidance should be disciplined by a sound and firm sense of values. He cannot pilot his pupils' taste towards "the good" in literature unless he has succeeded in arranging all the literary works he knows, both past and present, in a hierarchical order of value--a hierarchy, moreover, which cannot be taken on trust from any "authority," and which needs to be continually reconstructed and modified in the light of fresh personal experience. This is all the more important in an age when so many agencies outside the classroom combine to mislead the young by lending a specious prestige to inferior writers merely because they are "new" or in vogue.

This reference to literature of the past leads me to one further dimension of growth which we should expect to find in our pupils' dealings with literature. When a young child encounters a story or a poem, he reads it as something which stands on its own, a thing apart; he cannot place it in any context of social or literary history, because his total experience of stories and poems is still slender and he is too young to have any real sense of history. As our students grow older, we shall certainly want them increasingly to undertake their reading of literature "in context"--the context being that provided by knowledge about the author and his other works, about the conditions of the time in which he wrote, and about his relationship to other writers. The total amount which can ever be contributed by such background knowledge to our understanding and enjoyment of a work of literature is, I believe, relatively small; nor is it such as to justify the kind of historical survey course which in Great Britain is increasingly being discarded, even at college and university level, in favour of courses which concentrate on particular periods, authors, or genres. Nevertheless, it does form part of that full understanding of literature towards which we should be moving at the highest levels of study; and there is a need for careful consideration of the stages at which it becomes possible and the procedures by which it may be most effectively introduced.

In this paper all I have tried to do is to provide a conceptual framework for our thinking about "continuity" by outlining those dimensions of the human developmental sequence which seem particularly

relevant to English teaching. In many of the areas I have touched on it may seem that what has been disclosed above all is the extent of our ignorance. However, if my general thesis should be accepted, it may be that one of the important tasks for our seminar will be to identify those issues on which further research is most urgently needed.

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PLENARY SESSION II - "What is 'Continuity' in English Teaching?" - August 22, 1966

Chairman: Arthur Eastman
Discussant: Bernice Christenson
Author: Frank A. Whitehead

Arthur Eastman: I originally thought that I would briefly summarize Mr. Whitehead's paper and do it outrageously mistaking his points, but doing it firmly and confidently. Then I would ask Mrs. Christenson as Discussant to pick up Whitehead as I had corrupted him and she would continue, assuming that what I had said was true and wildly disagree. Yesterday's discussion made it perfectly evident that we need not go to these artificial lengths to stimulate discussion here. I suspect that not often has so much been said so well by so many. It seems to me that the chairmen sit in lonely eminence in their incompetence at these meetings. I was given heart by watching Mr. Barnes; he allowed himself exactly two minutes and thirty seconds to make his introduction. (I'm following that model closely.) Then he gave the discussant a full thirty minutes. And Miss Christenson, I shall give you at least thirty minutes. Then he spoke briefly, but authoritively, quieting the dissentious when it was necessary.

I suppose in the light yesterday's discussion the topic for today ought to be retitled, "What is Continuity in the Teaching of What?" I am assuming that yesterday's question stays with us as we cope with today's. The only thing I know about continuity in teaching is what a friend of mine used to say, which is, "teach, test, and reteach"; and I assume that that does provide a pattern that a good many of us in fact practice. Macbeth is taught early and taught late and I understand still is being taught. Miss Christenson, why don't you get me off the hook and come up and be a discussant?

Miss Christenson:

First of all, let me say that as I read Dr. Whitehead's paper, I can't tell you how pleased I was to have a paper of this nature reflect my thinking too. I am delighted to be able to try to think it through with you today and then perhaps pose some problems that I feel we need to think about during the Seminar.

I'd like to review briefly some of Mr. Whitehead's major points. First of all, he takes into account the apparent demand for an order of sequence in the teaching of English as it is arising or as it is existing in school organization. He notes that because children must progress from one teacher to the next, there tends to be a great deal of overlapping as well as unintended gaps and omissions. It is important that we think through these kinds of gaps and the kinds of overlapping that there are in our schools. I have heard it repeatedly said that children study verbs, adjectives, nouns at the second grade, at the third grade, and at every succeeding grade level. Is this what we want in an English program? I don't think it is. So, we have hope that this type of overlapping can be discontinued and we can look at other areas of greater importance when we think about English.

But, what about English? Is it at all possible to have the type of organizational structure suggested by Bruner? Two points of view were noted in Mr. Whitehead's paper concerning the lack of agreement of a sequential curriculum from the basic principles of structure in literature. The first was directed toward literary forms, the internal relationship characterizing these forms and the formal characteristics of rhythm, imagery, dramatic irony and the narrative point of view. The second point of view involved the basic reoccurring themes which comprise experiences in literature. Mr. Whitehead

notes that the disadvantage here is that attention is drawn away from the piece of literature to the features which, when extracted from the work, can be linked with other words. We need to think about whether this is the way we want to bring literature into the curriculum. The concern here is that one might not learn to read literature and respond to it, but rather that children might just learn about the work.

Three objections were made on establishing a sequence for teaching English from an internal structure. The first one was that there is no body of agreement as to the nature of this structure. Nor does one seem to be in the offing. It is not even sure whether one should look to literary criticism or to linguistics for it. The second objection--the search for structure as a guiding principle--leads to knowledge about the language or about literature rather than of usage. I think usage is absolutely essential in every phase of the English curriculum. This is one area that we have neglected far too long. The third objection is that a closely knit sequence could be very limiting to the teacher. This is a point that I think could probably raise a great deal of discussion in boards of education. We know what we want our teachers to do, we know how we want our children to learn, we know how we want teachers to work with children, but often such professional knowledge is in conflict with the thinking of boards of education.

The problem suggests that a new direction needs to be taken. The role of English is to foster, improve, and refine the individual's ability to use his native language. The physical, social, intellectual and emotional growth of each individual must be very carefully involved and considered as one thinks through an overall program. Thus, there should actually be an inter-disciplinary approach to the teaching of English combining knowledge of the

human growth and development with the understanding of the use of the English language. And, I think as we look at our children we realize that there are certain stages in language that are more essential than others. If we can be very thorough, if we can be very helpful in helping children to acquire the skills to become independent, I think we will have a much better group of children to work with in the secondary school.

When you think of children in deprived areas, you realize that when they are so far behind they can't possibly catch up. What kind of program are we going to provide these children? Are we going to be thinking about a program for them at all? Or will we think only about the average child? On the other hand, are we going to do something special for them? All of these problems must be thought about when we discuss sequence of instruction.

In thinking of a sequence, are we going to consider only a vertical kind of arrangement in the program? Or will we also consider an enriching horizontal kind of organization? I would surely hope that the horizontal would be the area with which we would pay closest attention.

As we look at this new direction and as we think about the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual characteristics of children, it is necessary to think carefully about how we can pull these characteristics together in terms of the various levels of the curriculum. Where, for example, should we have some overlapping if we need it? A review of the development of children's language abilities reveals an orderly arrangement with listening preceding speaking, with the use of single words preceding those in sentences or into phrases, and with experiences in listening and speaking preceding reading and writing. Here is an instance where I think that we not only are going to strengthen language abilities throughout the grades, but also we must think in terms of overlapping.

The rate at which a child progresses through a sequence, any sequence, is different. We simply can't stereotype children. We need to look at the individual. We need to look at the kind of program we are providing in the classroom so that we do take care of each child. If we do this, I think that we will find in the long run we are going to have many more successful young people at the secondary level and so I think that consideration should be given to the kinds of patterns in language development as they work in through the different grade levels.

Dr. Whitehead has identified several different levels of linguistic growth and has distinguished these as they are concerned with recurring patterns inherent in the individual's language usage. He identifies the levels in the following ways: The first level is that of phonology and in this it is indicated that according to Templin, three-fourth's of the children can produce more than 80 percent of the phonemes of the language correctly by the age of six. He notes that the child's speech at an early age reflects a function, though not yet precise in terms of the phonemic system yet he has some mastery of it as he works along. He also notes that the child's ability to analyze words in small components follows a rather long time after his ability to produce them accurately.

The second level is the dual levels of morphology and syntax. It is noted that 98 percent of all children are in full control of the structure of group communication by the time they are five and one-half years old. This tells us then that the child learns these patterns at home or within his community, and suggests to the school that its responsibility is not to teach basic sentence patterns. Rather the problem is to help the child to enrich and to enlarge what he already knows.

The third area is the phrase-structure level and transformational level. And it was indicated here that most children used all structures beginning at grade four and that the difference was in the sentence combining transformations. This has been carefully elaborated in Mr. Whitehead's paper.

The next area concerns the child's language development throughout the school years. And, here studies indicate that one learns first to identify the meaning of the word and secondly the knowing of the word and that this necessarily follows in this sequence. The importance of experiences is indicated and I would hope that as we think about language programs that we give considerable thought to first-hand experiences, with many kinds of materials in many kinds of situations. I can't help but think of many of the pre-schools that I have observed recently where children will come into a class situation and simply stand and look. They are awed by many of the things that they see, but they use no language. They simply look. They don't know what they want to do. They don't know where they want to go. And so we have to be very careful that we don't push them into a situation, but give them time to look it over. Give them lots of time if they need it. Then, as they get into the experience, we can help them with the language.

The importance of the method of teaching receives emphasis in Mr. Whitehead's paper. The teacher's sensitivity and understanding is, of course, basic to the guidance of young children. We mentioned in-service training yesterday; I think it is crucial and that it is especially so now. Very often we are finding--and this is true in California--that we have to take people who are less qualified in the teaching situations, because we simply do not have enough teachers. We have more classrooms than teachers. For example, our district as of about three weeks ago, still needed to fill 900 classrooms, and because of this we needed to take persons who were less qualified. This,

I think, is very unfortunate because to establish an effective in-service training program for this number of teachers is very difficult. As a result of this problem, children in kindergarten, the first grade and in some of the pre-schools, are going to come into a situation with a less experienced teacher. We are very unhappy about it but there isn't much we can do about it right at this time.

I would hope that the experiences that our teachers provide can be in a situation that will cause children to think rather than simply listen. This is one of the things that we have found with young teachers. They are very anxious to tell children everything without bothering to ask a question. We need to help teachers learn how to ask questions. We need to help the teachers learn now to help children ask questions. I think this is very important. I would hope that we could give this problem some thought later on in the Seminar.

Three main dimensions of growth were described very briefly in Mr. Whitehead's paper. The first one concerned a young child's language usage with its limit in range and flexibility. At this stage, we notice that the child has limited concern for others. For example, at the kindergarten level we might find that some of these children come and play all by themselves and may even just talk to themselves. Then as they go along, they may be playing together with other people but they will be talking either to themselves or to these other people and so we have this parallel kind of language going on. Then eventually they get to where they can talk with others, although they may not necessarily agree. Finally they get to where they can agree and work together. And, I think of that as I think of the kinds of materials you need to provide them. There should be opportunities for children not only

when they work independently, but there should be kinds of experiences that involve three or four people. In this instance, I can think of a rocking toy large enough to hold four little girls or boys. As the children come into the playschool or the pre-school, you will find that this is the one toy many of them want to play with but they are not very successful with it because they want to play alone and it is a toy that you don't play alone with. It is amazing to watch these children as they work with this because one will get in alone then the next one eventually will come in. You will find that they are chanting little things together, they are talking things over together and they are finding other activities to work with once they have first been able to work in something successfully. This is the kind of thing we like to see them doing.

The second dimension involves the development of the child's ability to cope with abstractions. Concept development is of concern here for the greater the stock of concept, the broader the use of vocabulary. It is amazing the lack of concept that children at the elementary school level can have. In a disadvantaged area, for example, you will find that many children have so few concepts that their vocabulary is limited in talking about something that they are working with in class. I think of the children in one of our kindergartens and also in one of the pre-schools who were working with rabbits. The very first time they saw a rabbit all they could say was that it was soft. There wasn't another word they could use until they had experiences with kinds of things and they could know that it was soft, that it was warm, that it was silky, and that it sniffled. There were some very fine things that came out after they had a chance to work with the animals for a while. Then I think also of another situation where, after they got

experience with many kinds of rabbits, they learned to know that there was a white rabbit, there was a brown rabbit, there was a black and white rabbit. This is the way in which the concept can enlarge and suddenly a turkey was brought into the situation and the question asked, "What is it?" No one seemed to know what this animal was and they looked at it for a long time. The teacher just had it in the play yard and it was really quite a handsome bird. There was a ittle fence around it and the children looked at it for a long time--didn't say anything at all. Finally the teacher thought, we must do something. We've got to find out what kind of animal this is, so she gathered a little group and they went over to look at the animal. She said, "Well, what do you think it is?" They really didn't know. She asked them to imitate the sounds that it was making which they could do and so forth, but they still didn't know what it was. Finally, one little fellow felt thoroughly obligated to say something and after all they had had rabbits in the classroom since September and it was now November and so the first thing he said was, when she looked at him, "Man, what a big rabbit!" By that time there had to be an understanding that this was not a rabbit, that this was an animal that was a different kind of animal. The teacher talked about the different kinds of animals and how they are alike and how they are different. By the time these children left their classroom in the spring they knew many kinds of animals. They knew the difference between a duck and a chicken, and they could talk about them and identify them very quickly either through pictures or through the real animal itself.

In developing concept development we can think in terms of simple things such as the kinds of fruit that might bebrought into the classroom. For example, in another situation children at their ten o'clock break were shown a tray of apples and all of the apples were red. Each child got an apple;

they looked at them; they talked about them. The teacher cut them so the children could talk about the seeds that were inside. They looked at the skin of the apple, they talked about the colors in this respect, they finally ate them. Then a few days later the teacher brought another tray of apples. This time half of the apples were green and half were red, and no one wanted a green apple. They really didn't know quite what they were, though they knew what the red apples were and everyone wanted those. They talked about these again; they cut them, they looked at them, and finally had a chance to eat them. Now along through all of these experiences she was trying to develop the concept of what you could do with apples--what an apple was. For at other times they had apple juice, they made apple sauce. There are many other kinds of instances where you will do this with young children. I am talking perhaps more about young children that I should except that they are very dear to me, as you can probably tell.

The third dimension discussed is that of the child's ability to make a critical analysis of his own work. The need for the acquisition of discriminations around which judgments come to be organized is included in Mr. Whitehead's paper. The need for the use of appropriate terminology to evaluation is seen. Here again I think it is important that we consider the kinds of questions asked by the teacher. If we simply get yes and no responses, children simply can't grow and so we do want to have our levels of questioning very obvious as well as the content of the situation.

A review of the areas of literature is included. Some of the prime responsibilities are to help the child develop the ability to respond to literature with creative sensitivity; to develop the ability to correct and amplify inadequate or mistaken impressions. One important question is whether it is possible to expose all children to all literary forms or

whether certain forms should be delegated to certain grade levels. I think that there are areas that can be introduced more profitably at one grade than at another; and, as we go into Study Groups, this is probably one of the things we will be discussing.

There were two points of view toward the teaching of literature. The first one was that the teacher select the materials and present them to the children. The second one was that the teacher guide the children, helping them to become familiar with all types of literature, to help them make decisions. This guidance approach is what I like to see, because it helps make the child independent. And, after all, I think one of our first responsibilities is toward helping the child become an independent kind of person in the classroom.

The fourth dimension is that of helping children learn to read literature through knowledge about the author. There should be a knowledge about the prime conditions. There should be a knowledge about the basic relationship to other writers. I think here in terms of a group of children at fourth grade level who were having great difficulty with reading. They could converse very well, but for some reason or other--these children were a mixed group first of all--they were having a great deal of difficulty. Now, at this level, the teacher decided it might be good to try thinking about who made the books they were working with. Not many of them had given it much thought; so they started talking about it. One of the girls was Japanese and the teacher quickly saw that she might have an interest in someone such as Carl Yashima. And so, she saw to it that there were several things on the library table for this little girl. And she did this in each instance for this group of fifteen children that she had. She saw to it that

there were materials that were directly related to the group that they would be interested. As a result of this, she was able to go ahead in the very sequence suggested in Mr. Whitehead's paper.

Mr. Whitehead indicated in the closing of this paper that there should be a conceptual framework for thinking about continuity by outlining the dimensions of the human development sequence as it relates to the teaching of English. We must certainly look at this, not only the looking at the child development as such--and there certainly are sequences of growth--but also English as it develops with the children.

I am delighted with Mr. Whiteheads paper. I think it has a great deal to offer and it should make good learning experiences in all situations and I am delighted to see that.

Response to Working Party Paper 2
"What is Continuity in English Teaching?"

There are several questions that came to mind as I looked at the paper and so I would imagine that you have questions too.

1. Have we considered children who are not English speaking or are we going to consider only children in the non-standard English speaking group? I think both of these might want to have some consideration.
2. Will anything be considered and done for the gifted child? I think this is important too. Although I think many programs have tried to include these children, I think we would not want to forget them. Here again, is an excellent way of stretching out horizontally the kind of things that can be done for children better than looking at a vertical program.
3. How can we guide teachers as they learn to work with concept development (in) children? As we look through and learn more about how to question, ways to question, and why to question, etc., I think we can help teachers through an inservice program. Then, I think we need to think about questioning itself, looking at the sequence within this grouping.
4. What kinds of children's experiences are good? Unless we really plan very carefully, we can too often have the same kinds of experiences over and over again. I would hope that we could be creative enough so that children will not lose interest; because if they have the same kinds of experiences over and over, they will lose interest. We need some overlapping; we need some repetition, but we need many new things too.

5. Then, I think perhaps one of the most important things, and it is very close to me, is the development of attitudes of behaviors and of values. What are we doing, how are we doing it? Are we putting that into our programs? I think we must give that a great deal of thought. We are finding that this is an especially important item because what do you do with a child who simply says to the teacher, "I don't have to listen to you."? This type of thing can go on very often in a classroom, and more so, perhaps, in disadvantaged areas but certainly (verbatim) in the other areas. What can we do to help the teacher provide the kinds of experiences that are important so that the child will be interested and will continue?

5. Then, I think perhaps one of the most important things, and it is very close to me, is the development of attitudes of behaviors and of values. What are we doing, how are we doing it? Are we putting that into our programs? I think we must give that a great deal of thought. We are finding that this is an especially important item because what do you do with a child who simply says to the teacher, "I don't have to listen to you."? This type of thing can go on very often in a classroom, and more so, perhaps, in disadvantaged areas but certainly (verbatim) in the other areas. What can we do to help the teacher provide the kinds of experiences that are important so that the child will be interested and will continue?

Report of Working Party II

The problem area

School learning bombards students with "impersonal" language. Within the British system, at any rate, as the bombardment mounts, personal language especially in the written form retreats from the classroom (except for an ill-defined and rather phoney journalism).

The result seems to be that many pupils never acquire this language and moreover often lose confidence in their power to use the written language in general. If our attitudes to the spoken language make millions tongue-tied and nervous about the courses they are taking, our thoughtless use of these "unnatural" written languages terminates for many the possibility of further education; frightens them away from areas of intellectual excitement. Some who survive do so by desperate mimicry.

If we care about continuity, then at the secondary stage we should ask:

(i) are there stages in the acquisition of this kind of language? (which raises dozens of other very awkward questions)

(ii) how does it, or perhaps could it, be related to the personal uses of language, including "creative writing" (unhappy phrase since it implies that the impersonal cannot be creative).

There are massive questions, even frightening ones. But I do not believe we can or should wait until some piece of research comes up with an answer (probably tentative).

Can we agree on some of the following?

(a) The language by means of which a student is expected to study and express much (most?) of his subject learning is at the furthest pole from his spontaneous language in which as an individual he becomes the smallest dialect unit.

(b) Impersonal language requires us not so much to eliminate subjectivity as to cover its traces. The deepest personal involvement should precede and accompany its use but this subjectivity has to be inhibited.

(c) Both the above points suggest that however sensitively and creatively a child is using language at say 8 or 9 years, we can see that he has a long distance to travel if he is to become at say 18 a confident user of the varied resources of the written language. This development is not simply getting better and better at doing the same things (i.e., getting nearer and nearer to "good English" or becoming "less childish") but learning to do new things.

What is impersonal language?

I. We need to settle this, first in theoretical terms and then perhaps in linguistic ones.

The ideal is clearly single constant senses no matter how high the abstraction and the elimination of all language which draws attention to the uniqueness of the writer. Latin seemed to do this perfectly once it was dead (but did its users ever forget their Cicero, etc. ?), but the use of the vernacular meant that scientists tried to create a language of their own (see the Royal Society's efforts) - a language of minimal redundancy.

Is there really one mode of scientific language or a group of modes, e.g. discussion of general principles, specialists speaking to specialists, exposition to laymen, exposition to learners, etc.? The objective element is common to all of them. But the abrupt transitions in our schools seem to imply that only one mode is appropriate. However, the scientist has an attitude to his work. It is from his attitude that his writing springs. We expect young people to use that kind of writing before they have learned the attitude, the style of work if you like, as though you make scientists by teaching them the passive voice or avoidance of the second person.

II. The adult use of impersonal language presumes an unknown audience about whom the only valid assumption is that they want access to the ideas, data, etc. without ambiguity and subjectivity and a writer who wishes to make them available. There is a special school problem here in use of this kind of pretense, especially as it demands resources which most students cannot call upon in order to write down something for a teacher, who knows it anyway.

III. The linguists can give us an analysis of the conventional features of different kinds of language but can they tell us anything about effectiveness within one kind? A good and a bad historical account may both be in perfect "register." What in linguistic terms differentiate them? Can we as teachers be as neutral as linguists towards "registers"? Do we give the same priority to business letters as to historical prose? Each school subject seems to operate within its own sub-language encrusted with linguistic conventions some of which still serve a useful purpose, some of which do not. Some close study

needed here - note the ill-defined journalism of school history and geography textbooks.

IV. The psychological aspects of learning this language must be explored. There are some very promising ideas in Vyotski, especially his analysis of progress from pseudoconcept to concept and also his observations on the contrast between the adolescent's ability to form and use a concept and his relative inability to verbalize it. He suggests that analysis of reality with the help of concepts precedes the analysis of the concepts themselves. The verbalization of concepts within different subject disciplines has a complex history; it is probably not a simple matter of perfecting language to embody rational thought. If we do not distinguish between the linguistic-conventional and the linguistic-intellectual we will be in danger of confusing the judge's wig with justice (viz. the role learning of definitions, etc. Is there only one version of Boyle's Law?)

Some educational implications

I. For many pupils school is the only arena for access to certain kinds of verbalized thought and certain activities which give rise to them. The more deeply a subject is penetrated the further its verbalization grows from the currency of everyday speech and personal literature. But mastery requires intellectual struggle. How can we make this struggle worthwhile rather than hopeless?

II. How can we bridge the gap between the personal and impersonal? We rush the whole process because we have not considered what is involved. The

whole business is made more difficult by writers of textbooks who have only read other textbooks. This is usually the pupil's first encounter with physics, history, etc.

III. Much of language encountered in school looks at children across a chasm.

(a) Some fluent children adopt the jargon (examination success is the reward) and parrot stretches of lingo. Personal intellectual struggle is made irrelevant; the personal view is outlawed. Language and experience are torn asunder.

(a) Some children find the textbook mere noise. It is alien in its posture, conventions, and strategies (some sociological as well as linguistic criteria here). They cannot mime the performance nor are they high in morale when confronted with new language experience.

Some random jottings

Conscious attention to language as language should increase as pupils mature. See Abercrombie's discussion of the word "normal" with medical students in "The Anatomy of Judgment." What are they learning? Medicine or language?

Working public depends on the conventions of our language system, but system is not only outside: It must be internalized to be made use of; we must show it to ourselves first. Dialogue inside grows out of dialogue with others. This is how society penetrates our thinking. We cannot in school

focus on making public and ignore the rest of the process. If we do, we lose the force of alternative ideas, attitudes and strategies.

Language as intellectual socialization

The written language is an institutionalized medium of learning, teaching, speculation, etc. Communication through it is part of our struggle to learn and describe. But to carry out this process we depend on certain models, rules, and conventions through which we make contact. The models become social institutions; when we examine these institutions we examine society. Large-scale communication is partly "formulaic" so that it may be quickly and easily used.

Record of Group Discussion

In many ways the British have continuity built into their curricula by their system of examinations. Wishing to escape from this, which seems to them institutionalized corruption, they need to find principles to provide what the examinations have hitherto.

The Americans, without the dubious benefits of the continuity provided by the British system of examinations, often feel that they have precious little continuity at all. To be sure, those entering college may be presumed to have read Macbeth in the 9th grade and studied some American literature in the 11th, but one wouldn't want to push too much further. They tend, therefore, to reach out eagerly for patterns of continuity, both of form and substance.

As to substance, what some Americans would like, though perhaps they should be paid little attention, is the certainty that, at certain stages, they could count on their students having attained certain literary experience - that is, having read certain staples. And perhaps we might ask whether a minimal list might not be made out - if not of individual works, then of types of works - a Shakespearean tragedy, perhaps, though the particular tragedy not necessarily specified.

Form tends to offer the Americans something a shade less doubtful, and Wayne Booth's rhetorical line shows one way to get continuity - to introduce, in their reading and their writing, various of the rhetorical concerns at various levels - awareness of situation and audience, awareness of ethos, awareness of arguments emotional and logical - these awarenesses developed in a host of ways in the writing and reading of poems, dramatic scenes, arguments, expositions.

The British, though, badly burned by stupid formalism, by talk about literature at the expense of the experience of literature, want to soft pedal just about anything that smacks of form, naming, critical jargon, etc.

Perhaps this will serve as a rough introduction to our problem. Continuity is our concern - something less specific than a curriculum, something more ordered than chaos. What are the principles and the conditions? Here is a grab bag of points raised in our various discussions:

Stage matters more than age. . ."Just looking" different from "looking for" and comes later. . .A certain autonomy from needs and drives something to be working for in the pupil's development. . .A distinction between shaping experience and attending to it. The shaping "corrupts" attending. . .The teacher should keep the situation, the writing assignment open as long as and as much as possible. . .Personal and "impersonal" writing - which kind? when? stages?. . .The writing down or recording of purely sensory perception comes very late - post-graduate level. . .Is there a progress in a student's use of language from convention to the idiosyncratic, from cultural stereotypes to fresh symbols?. . .Where do we begin to ask students to become conscious of language and the way it is used? Where of critical concepts, labels, forms? . . .Children in the early grades mix up forms, switching from one to another. In the later grades they tend to stick to one form. . .There are different modes by which the pupil apprehends form - there is some apprehension of form from the very beginning; similarly, there are different levels of consciousness about language. . .Is the aim of the English curriculum to develop the widest discrimination about and use of language and literature?. . ."Analogues of

consciousness? and the possibility of arranging our teaching according to a hierarchy of these. . . Let us not rush consciousness of decorum. . . Whitehead's 3 foci: "contextualization," abstraction, evaluation. . . Continuity- of what? at what levels? for whom? according to what principles? . . . Continuity in relation between student and teacher? . . . Does continuity connote progression?

At the first meeting of Working Party Two, Muriel Crosby opened with some general remarks on continuity: does it equal relationship?, are we concerned with the external continuity of the subject or the internal continuity of the individual?, etc. This initial line of discussion did, however, get nowhere. Indeed, the discussion turned, after some brief talk about external continuity and mobility and of the sterility of Nebraska's complete lack of sequencing, back to page 21 of Frank Whitehead's working party paper in which there seemed to be the implication that the visceral literary response was to be replaced by the cortical rather than be augmented by the cortical. We generally agreed that a goal of the study of literature was not to replace the primary response at all, but we disagreed about the necessity of ever getting to the literary criticism response. Mr. Rosen spoke of the stages between the two poles and took the position that crossing the frontier to the lit. crit. response should be a possibility in the schools but should not be the rule of discussion. Mr. Fisher disagreed: the frontier must be crossed.

This first session ended with our each introducing a question which we felt bore importantly on the question of continuity. Mr. Rosen and Mr. O'Neil were concerned with what kind (if any) systematic study of language there

should be, why there should be such study, when and where? Mrs. Christenson with the relationship between literature, language, and composition and the development of the child; Mrs. Rosen with more specific discussion of the stages of development; Mr. Harding with salvaging Whitehead's 21st page by virtue of his 17th; Mr. Dixon with our model of continuity ("Was it common ground within the group that we were not concerned with a line or model?"); Mrs. Hardy with clarifying what we mean by development of literary response; Mr. Olson with whether it was not the obligation of the school to lead people beyond their own specific linguistic environment to an understanding of literary idiom.

Record of Group Discussion

I. (p. 6, para. 2) English as a school subject consists in teaching the child to use his language, one "use" being to gain a disciplined acquaintance with some part of his literature.

II. (p. 1) Some coordination of work at different stages is necessary in order to avoid gaps and wasteful overlapping.

III. (p. 8, top) The sequence of stages in the child's increasing capacity to use his language is (after the very earliest stages) determined mainly by social influence and changing inner needs.

IV. (pp. 13-14) The teacher's main role is to give children occasions to use their developing language in appropriate ways and for purposes that involve them deeply ("use" again including contact with literature).

V. (p. 15, top) The child must learn appropriate forms of language for different purposes (expository, persuasive, etc.), different occasions and different audiences.

VI. (p. 15, para. 2, and p. 17, top) The child should gain increasing ability to handle abstractions, but without losing the ability to use language concretely.

VII. (p. 17, para. 2) The child should gain a stable central system of discriminations and evaluations around which new discriminations are organized as his reading extends.

VIII. (p. 19 top) Probably all literary devices and stylistic features can be appreciated, in their simpler forms, at the earliest stages of reading or listening to stories.

IX. (p. 19, para. 2) At later stages children can be led to discover the precision with which the writer conveys experience through the verbal organization of his writing, and they can sometimes be aided in this by an explicit discussion of literary forms, techniques and devices, though they may achieve the essential literary response without it.

X. (p. 21, para. 1) Progress towards maturity in literary experience consists in (a) changes in the dominant themes that the student can approach; and (b) "growth in the capacity for objective and depersonalized response." (I am not sure what this second phrase means. Perhaps more generally we could say that progress towards maturity in literary experience consists in an increasing range of interest, increasingly subtle discriminations within the areas of interest, increasing coherence and consistency in the systems of affective response associated with interests, and an increasing grasp of the literary resources available for conveying these discriminations and affective responses.)

XI. (p. 22) The teacher's guidance must be disciplined by a sound and firm, though provisional, set of literary values which he has made his own and not simply taken on trust from some "authority."

XII. (p. 23) Other students should read literature in the context provided by knowledge about the author and his other works, the period in which he wrote, and his relation to other writers, but such knowledge contributes only a little towards a full understanding of a literary work.

A Precis of Frank Whitehead's "What Is 'Continuity' in English Teaching?"

Thesis 1: Efforts to derive "a sequential curriculum from 'the basic principles of structure in literature'" or from "'basic recurring themes'" have been essentially arbitrary, deflective, and restrictive.

Thesis 2: "We must look for our source of order to the inherent and inescapable sequence in the acquisition of a man's mother-tongue..."

The language: The growing child develops in the complexity of his sentence structure, in the size of his vocabulary, and in the control of paragraph organization. Pedagogy: "The developmental evidence points, not to a pre-planned programme of instruction, but rather to a flexible teaching strategy in which the teacher uses his greater sensitivity and wider perspectives to nudge his pupils along in the directions in which they are already moving."

The use of language: (the patterns dealt with above - in a developing complexity of sentence structure, size of vocabulary, and control of paragraph organization - are synchronous; the patterns dealt with here are sequential, though overlapping):

a) "contextualization" - the growing child, escaping from his initial "egocentrism," discovers bit by bit audience, situation, and purpose, the conventions that distinguish written from oral discourse, the different "registers" appropriate to different contexts, and begins to vary his discourse accordingly. Pedagogy: "Providing an increasingly wide range of highly

specific situations, audiences, and purposes which will compel the student to shape his writing to their needs. The 'modes of discourse' and the 'social registers' are not something to be learnt as precepts and then applied; they should be held, rather, in the teacher's mind as a map parcelling out the ground that needs to be covered."

b) "conceptualization," especially the "upward categorization of perceptually dissimilar things," - Piaget's stage of " 'formal operations' (i.e., symbolic thinking which is no longer bound to the concrete here and now)" - the child enters this stage generally at about eleven or twelve years of age.
Pedagogy: "Although massive experience evidently plays a large part, there is doubt whether deliberate teaching can significantly accelerate the transition to it."

c) "assessment" by the student, both of what he reads and of what he writes, "the gradual development of a stable core of more sustained discriminations around which new judgments come to be organized..." Pedagogy: "The stage at which critical assessment can enter explicitly into the practice of the classroom will need careful discussion; there is much disagreement here, and, perhaps, a certain amount of muddled thinking."

Literature: A developmental sequence is presumed to exist, not in the appreciation of particular literary devices or stylistic features, but in the

kinds of appreciation children can have with literature:

a) From "relatively undisguised wish-fulfillment" to something more complex and impersonal.

b) From one kind of theme to another - "there are certain ages below which we do not expect young people to appreciate Donne's Songs and Sonnets, Wordsworth's nature-poetry, or King Lear." Pedagogy: A fundamental division exists between presenting and making attractive "'good literature,' selecting, condensing, diluting or adapting it. . . to make it acceptable to. . . pupils," and guiding the "pupils' reading in such a way that their immature likes and dislikes are gradually changed for the better."

"Literary history": There is a development from the young child's reading what he reads as "a thing apart" and the older student's reading literature "'in context.'" Pedagogy: "The total amount which can ever be contributed by background knowledge to our understanding and enjoyment of a work of literature is. . . relatively small," but "it does form part of that full understanding of literature towards which we should be moving at the highest levels of study; and there is a need for careful consideration of the stages at which it becomes possible and the procedures by which it may be most effectively introduced."

Toward a Model of Continuity

Assumptions. The following statement is a picture of what may be, not of what we know to be. We shall have to try it for accuracy and try to create alternative pictures which may be more accurate.

The emphasis, in the search for continuity, should be placed on the discourse of the student - on the progression in his modes of depicting and organizing experience. A model with this emphasis will more readily suggest kinds of speaking and writing assignments than schedules of reading; however, since words received and words given are related in a circular way, a reading sequence would presumably weave in and out of student talk and writing. A new mode of writing might require prior reading in that mode if the student is to "learn" the requisite structures.

Embryology provides us with a very general metaphor for cognitive and verbal growth. The development goes from a single cell toward a fuller and fuller differentiation and articulation of the parts within the whole. Integration and differentiation proceed together and proceed by means of each other. We build our knowledge "upward" and "downward" at the same time. In a sense, a child over-abstracts, at first, as well as under-abstracts: he cuts his world into a few simple categories that cover too much and discriminate too little, that display no subordinate or superordinate relations among themselves. Or he makes too broad inferences because he is operating with one variable instead of crossing variables.

Simple continuities.

The student may move:

1) From "language about things" to "language about language" - learning the art of relating relations and operating on operations.

2) From the actualities to the potentialities - from sensory evidence to the systematization of logical possibilities.

3) From offering the implicitly embodied idea to setting down the explicitly formulated one.

4) From addressing the familiar audience and small to the large, complex, and "unknown" or "distant" one.

5) From the here-now to the there-then as regards his search for understanding of the outside world.

6) From projecting into the there-then to projecting into the here-now as regards unrecognized psychic material (e.g. projecting first into myth, then romance, then naturalistic fiction).

7) From synpraxic chatter and prattle to monologue that sustains a subject (i.e., from disjointed speech governed by social interplay, accompanying play, and vagaries of attention to extended and unified utterance).

A plan of attack. The best strategy seems to be to separate and name "ways of thinking" and "ways of speaking." Then stages of cognitive growth may be made one dimension of the model and modes of discourse another.

Here is one grid so based but inadequate because, for one thing, it lacks a fictional-actual dimension to take account of the continuity specified in #6 above.

The vertical axis represents progression into a more and more remote and, therefore, more highly digested matter. The horizontal axis represents progression toward greater rhetorical differentiation in adapting to audiences different from oneself in age, sex, class, or cast of mind, to audiences more extended over space and time.

Cognitive stages. According to intuition and psychological theory, the stages of organizing experience proceed something like this:

I	II	III	IV
Coordinating objects and events in times and spaces	Inducing categories from instances	Relating categories to form propositions	Deriving implications by combining propositions

(Although the terms here imply conscious thought, the operations may well be sub-verbal and unconscious as well.) Possibly these successive and increasingly complex ways of "looking at" experience relate to certain kinds of lexicon, syntax, and modes of discourse. Successive assignments requiring these operations might bring successively to the fore, by entailment, various

kinds of vocabulary, sentence constructions, and modes of developing whole utterances. The idea needs further exploration, and with the help of linguists.

Modes of Discourse. The "modes of discourse" roughly parallel the progression of the ways of thinking:

I	II	III	IV
Narration	Typology	"Explanation"	Theory
(with spatial ordering, or description, as adjunct	(exposition according to types)	(generalizations and examples)	("statements about statements," "statements relating statements")

The labels here are poor, but no standard terminology is accurate, and only texts would illustrate. Of course one mode of discourse may be explicitly embedded in another (a narrative example within an explanation or a theoretical statement within a narrative). Again - and this brings in the whole fictional-actual dimension thus far undiscussed - the typological, explanatory, and theoretical may be embodied in narrative. The key word here is embodied, and it points to important relations between modes of discourse and ways of thinking. If the objects, persons, and actions of a story represent types or categories of experience, and if the turns of plot are, in fact, manipulations of the categories, then a child telling or reading a story is in a real sense unwittingly doing what adults would do in a later, explicit mode. Again, the narrative mode of discourse may be for a while a young child's only mode; all his symbolic organizations must be uttered "one after another as if in a story" though the child may actually order his utterances according to centers of interest rather than by strict chronology. He will not have a sense of the

decorum of mode, so that different cognitive orders may be represented in the same synpraxic chatter, the same "story," or whatever.

The interaction of ways of thinking and modes of discourse, as they develop, may be explained as follows. Before a child can conceptualize explicitly, his only mode of coherent utterance is through creating speech sequences which conform to "consciousness" sequences in a kind of one-to-one pairing of sentences and happenings. This works out in synpraxic chatter and prattle as a blow-by-blow mirroring of what the child thinks that he and others are doing, what is going on around, what he is feeling, etc. Such speech is enmeshed in the circumstances of its own utterance, in present time and space. A sustained narrative monologue also matches speech sequence with time sequence, but a story gains over synpraxic speech in that it refers out of the present, is more disengaged from and independent of ongoing circumstances. A story is symbolically more powerful because more selective, more summary, more explicit in reference. At this stage the child is not yet able to depart from chronology or the here and now of immediate attention and find an order of ideas upon which to organize his monological utterances. The result is that he must represent several kinds of thinking or knowing in his single mode of discourse. Further development will be toward differentiating modes of discourse to match, explicitly, his implicit ways of classifying and postulating. A child's stories are often richly ambiguous - like the tales he likes to hear and read. They may be his way of thinking and managing experience. Adults use this mode, in art, to symbolize matters that cannot be easily made explicit.

For the young child, then, narrative will serve, simultaneously or alternately 1) to report real instances of events, 2) to create and relate categories of instances by placing in relation some typifying or metaphorical objects, persons, and actions, and 3) to "solve" problems through the movement of plot (a kind of inchoate exploration of propositional possibilities). If this theory is sound, that narrative is for the child the basic but undifferentiated way of thinking, and if a progression of narratives can be identified that contribute to differentiation, the progression might provide a valuable series of educational experiences for the child. The various narratives, in other words (and the term is meant to include all the chronological genres, plays and narrative poems as well as myths, tales, fables, etc.) may offer a continuum of cognitive and verbal growth.

Children's stories, those they hear and read, and those they make, move both in the here-now of understanding and the there-then of projection (cf. 5-6 above). They may mix "fact" and "fiction" and move back and forth among categories 1-3 above. In view of our model, the stages of differentiation of dominant literary interest which would lead through what is equivalent to Discursive Stages I-IV above might be: as to plots, a movement of center of interest from the episodic to the fully plotted, "necessarily entailed"; as to characters, from the flat to the round (in Forster's sense), from the vaguely suggestive to the explicitly and complexly symbolic; as to description, from the undifferentiated, "colorful" to the precisely perceived ("the stripes to the tulip"). The categories are not adequate to fiction, and the movement posited may not be accurate. These remarks will serve to suggest the need

to explore the possible parities between discursive and literary-fictive stages.

The gradual, oscillating evolution of Typology, "Explanation," and Theory from narrative must be left to imagination. . . .

Addended Dissenter

There seem to be some things which Jim Moffett has left out or made insufficiently explicit. I raise these in the form of questions rather than quarrels, but would like to say that I am not questioning system in an anarchic fashion, but would indeed suppose that there is a developmental progression in our organizing of experience.

I. As it is set out, the model seems too narrowly linear. If we believe that the human being oscillates between the here-and-now and the dream, at all stages of experience, and continues to move between these two poles, growing in the imaginative ability to take in painful inner experiences in objectified forms and other outer experiences in affecting forms, then we might ask for a presentation of narrative which always provided the two poles, never dwelling on the literature of actuality or the literature of fantasy in an exclusive way, but mixing the forms and allowing further for the reception and creation of a narrative which united inner and outer, here-and-now and dream. I should want to have this breadth and mixture written into the model, and some of the observations on sequence of structures and modes of character would have to be modified accordingly.

II. The emphasis (though perhaps not all the implications) focusses attention on stages in the apprehension of structure and character rather

than on stages in the accommodation to modes of feeling and judging. The young child rejects and accepts narrative because it proffers certain difficulties and rewards of identification and choice, feeling and dreaming. We reject and accept because we are required to love, fear, tolerate, judge, be moved by, sympathize, recognize, organize, admit: our changing experience of literature demands movements in sympathy, empathy, externalization. We should recognize that narrative covers many modes of experience and offers an area for the exercise, testing, and control of our imaginative capacities to tolerate ourselves and the outside world. (A place for poetry might also be insisted on in this model, since it will in fact offer exercises on unexplained and unnamed and unhistoricized feeling, whereas fictitious narrative and drama will provide a mode of expanding our ability to feel and understand widening points of view.)

We should also make it quite clear that at every stage our literary experience will have four simultaneous stages: what the child (a) writes, (b) speaks, (c) reads, and (d) is read will offer different levels of affective and cognitive experience. For instance, a written story will at the youngest age be episodic for mechanical reasons, and, at the other extreme, a story read to the child will be able to communicate more advanced cognitive and affective experience, mediated as it is by the imagination, judgment, and sensibility of the adult.

III. How would the Moffett model fit into the rich and open experience of a primary class at its broadest? If the child's total experience of inner and outer worlds is to be freely drawn on, then a variety of structures and

subjects would surely be needed. We do not want a linear rut, however deep, cut through an educational experience in which English is deeply interfused with everything else. And we should press for the diffusion at later stages too.

"a shift from narrative or description to reflection - from the simple ordering of experiences to abstracting from experience - also may signal a shift from we-centered to individuated experience."

p. 12 "Linguistic Codes, Hesitation Phenomena and Intelligence"

On Continuity in the Study of the Native Language

In the past the native language has been studied continuously in the schools from grade a to grade z - continuously in the sense that the same ground was covered year after year. Given school grammar, it was quite within reason that continuity was compelled to take on a very narrow sense. Unwittingly the Skinner men have neatly clarified the nature of the task involved: a conditioned response that is species-independent will atrophy and finally die without constant reinforcement. School grammar does, after all, require a set of "learned" responses to a set of madly chosen stimuli. In what way is a child to remember to avoid the he don't's of language or how to name the parts unless he receives the teacher's unflinching dais-born glare of disapproval or the supreme gratification of not having to do it again?

Native language study of this sort has been strongly and justly condemned - by some because of its madness, by others because of its failure to improve certain aspects of a student's control over his language. I shall here speak only to the former point. Insofar as considerations of the latter sort are valid - that is insofar as "control over language" refers to matters of importance, and not to matters of prejudice, I can only predict that a general sort of improved control deriving from a person's being liberated in language will follow naturally upon a proper understanding of language. This much at least is certain: it is not the aim or an aim of language study to impose upon all the standard language of the middle class and thus to turn out a marketable commodity. Education looks to revitalize society, not to kill it;

to remake it, not to give in to its petty prejudices whether these be racial, political, or linguistic. Through language study, we hope to bring out students to a better understanding of themselves and of their world. It is up to them to make what they will of their knowledge.

What then is continuity in language study, given a new context in which this study is freed from the twin objectives of ours and the last century: improved expression and mental discipline? Clearly we have a goal or goals: to move from the study of the native language into an understanding of the mind and out to an understanding of society. Just as clearly we have a beginning: the language curiosity of five-year old native speakers, everyone of which - despite all claims to the contrary - speaks and thinks with untold complexity. To reach our goal we must move in time through at least three distinct stages:

(i) discussion of individual items, e.g., A's pronunciation of a word and B's;

(ii) inductively reached generalizations over an array of items, e.g., A's distribution of a given sound; question intonation in English;

(iii) systematic explanations of such generalizations, e.g., the phonology of English.

At one and the same time a given class might well be working at all three levels: at (iii) with the syntax of contemporary English, at (ii) with some aspects of contemporary English phonology, at (i) with some observations on the history of English that have come up in the reading of an Elizabethan play.

But always following from this very explicit language study is a random leading to a systematic feeding of knowledge about language into an understanding of mind and society, into an understanding, e.g., of the psychological reality of linguistic abstractions or of the values placed in society upon language superficialities.

The course of continuity suggested here is not one of Bruner's spirals whereby an oversimple version of a theory of language is filled out through the years to maximum capacity, but rather it is continuity in which students move through levels of explicitness and from abstraction to knowledge of what is in and about them.

How Children Learn English

Both in the group and in the Seminar in general there appears to be ready agreement that all psychologically normal children come to school already highly proficient in operating a wide range of language structures. Moreover since the language of the preschool child has been closely studied we can say, for once, that research confirms, possibly even initiated, this point of view. Two questions arise immediately:

1) How should the teacher build on this achievement?

2) Recognizing the scope of this achievement, what do we see as its limitations?

To pick up question 1, we need to accept the child's own language, but this is not a solely linguistic question, since it is only part of a total acceptance of the child and his way of life. (This is easily asserted as a pious principle but in practice raises enormous difficulties for many teachers.) It is only on the basis of the confidence built up in a child in this way that he is ready to be actively hospitable to the new language experiences that the school can offer.

To pick up question 2, Bernstein's ideas about restricted and elaborated codes suggest one kind of limitation. But all children need to extend their use of language to handle new ranges of experiences.

What the child has learned already he has learned under the pressure of the necessities and pleasures of daily living. If school is to continue the processes already started it must stir the same kind of pressure and kindle the same excitements. As in the preschool years the context must remain meaningful, an area of personal concern and exploration.

All this probably seems innocuous enough but it implies a radical change in the role of the teacher, not an abdication of responsibility but a change in its nature. The teacher, too, has to be hospitable to new experiences. The wisdom-dispensing authority must become an active participant working alongside the children, sharing their concerns and learning from them.

The Seminar has several times turned its attention to the ideas that language is one of the principal means by which we shape and order experiences. It arises from situation and *content. Changing the situation in which language arises is of crucial importance. The teacher needs to focus attention on two aspects of these situations:

1. The structured occasions when language is used.
2. The relationships within the group using language.

Is enough known about the functioning of groups?

The study of group dynamics has been too much separated from language study. Now that they are beginning to be brought together, some of the questions we should like to see investigated are:

1) How does children's language change in changing group situations? e.g. problem solving as against gossiping?
2) What difference does the presence of the teacher make?
3) How far does size of group affect the style of utterance?
4) What kind of language emerges from the carrying out of a common task, self-initiated as against teacher-initiated?

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*Content is used here in contrast to the term context, which refers to verbal setting.

Learning to read

Can the "artificial" process of teaching children to read be grafted on to the natural uses of language we have considered above?

(Note: See Barbara Strang's suggestion of the potential dangers inherent in the usual methods of teaching reading)

First, we see particular advantages in the first material being the children's own language, dictated to and transcribed by the teacher. (Yes, including dialects and "deviations.")

Second, the told story can be made the link between the spoken language and the written.

Third, learning to read and write leaves a child alone with language in a way which differs from his previous experience. This would not be made a sudden transition. These new activities should be preceded, accompanied, and followed by talk.

Fourth, the rewards of reading must, as soon as possible, be made the same as, or at least akin to the rewards of other uses of language. What is being read must arouse curiosity and not merely be an adult approved activity. (See "Teacher" and "Spinster" by S. Ashton Warner).

Much of our early reading* material is doctored or concocted English which in its unreality bears a r semblance to the exercises and drills which are put before the pupils throughout their school lives. Thus what is intended to encourage children to extend and enrich their language achieves the opposite effect through this talising tradition. Of course, there will

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*See Miriam Wilt's paper, "How Does a Child Learn English?"

normally be a gap between the child's own language and tha. which he meets in reading, but the reading must be of such a kind that it supplies sufficient powerful reward for making the attempt.

The broad principles we have sketched out would apply at any stage in education (e.g. accepting the students' language, language related to context etc.) The student's ability to express in language his view of experience makes him ready to widen this view and receive and use the language appropriate to it. At this point we should note that the limitations of time and our sense of the difficulty of the problem obliged us to concentrate for the most part on the younger child. We are, therefore, only able to make the briefest comments on the secondary stage.

It is clear that the bulk of research on how children learn language has concentrated on the youngest children. We were unanimous in our demand that much more research needs to take place, especially into the secondary state.

The Secondary or High School teacher of English needs to see himself as (among other things) a teacher of reading (even in, for example, literature lessons) and to be aware of the development sequence which controls his pupil's growth in reading. More specifically we need to pay attention to:

i) the role of "readiness" in easing the pupils transition to the later stages of the reading sequence.

ii) the fact that a large part of almost every pupil's vocabulary is learned from reading, even though such learning commonly works in with and reinforces learning which arises from the spoken language. (The "vocabulary lessons" which are still

widespread seem to derive from a different and wholly erroneous assumption.)

iii) the fact that it is to a large extent the child's reading that provides him with operational control over the structures and forms of standard written English.

It is in the secondary school above all where the explicit study of language becomes urgent. The only aspect with which we are concerned in this group is the question, Does the study of language help us to use it more effectively? Inevitably there is some difference of opinion but we can clarify the question itself. The study of language should raise to the level of consciousness what is already in operational use or subject to direct observation. If there is any feedback into use, is this direct or oblique? Must the study be confined to grammar? Must the pupil be expected to develop a highly systematized understanding?

The chopping up of the secondary school curriculum into separate subjects means that the student's learning of language has been thought of as a responsibility to be allotted to the English teacher and it has been assumed that others can wash their hands of it. It is the total language experience of the child with which we must be concerned. Right across the curriculum all language activities should be seen as reinforcing each other. Moreover it should be remembered that the child's dealings with language within the classroom forms only a small part of his total language experience.

The Problems of Impersonal Language

The Seminar should turn some of its attention to what happens to English in school "subjects" other than our own. In learning these subjects students are bombarded with "impersonal" language (theories, laws, generalized observations, analyses of events distant in time and space, etc.). As they go up the school, the bombardment mounts; the casualty figures are horrifying but easily explained away. They couldn't take it.

Could we make some attempt to settle what this "impersonal" language is?

Its extreme form is, I suppose, that scientific language where the ideal aimed at is single, constant senses no matter how high the abstraction and the elimination of all language drawing attention to the uniqueness of the writer. It is a language of minimal redundancy. But, of course, scientists do not use a single mode. Compare, for example, discussion of several principles, specialists speaking to specialists, exposition to laymen, exposition to teachers, etc. In our schools we tend to make the transition from the personal an abrupt one and to imply that there is a single heaven-sent mode (see the typical science note-book).

Whichever mode he uses the scientist operates from an objective centre which he has won from his work. It is from his attitude that his writing springs. We seem to expect young people to use that kind of writing before they have learned the attitude, the style of work if you like, as though you make scientists by teaching them the passive voice and the avoidance of the second person.

The adult use of "impersonal" language presumes

1) an unknown audience about whom the only valid assumption is that they want access to the ideas, data, etc., without ambiguity and subjectivity;

2) a writer who wishes to make them available.

This creates a special difficulty in school. What are the students writing for? Where are the resources to come from? What kind of urgent pressure to write exists in a setting where, in fact, they are usually writing for a teacher who has known it all anyway?

The linguists could no doubt give us analyses of the conventional features of different kinds of "impersonal" language. This would be useful. But we still need to settle what is an effective use of one kind. A good and a bad historical account may both be in perfect "register." How would we differentiate them? Each school subject seems to operate within its own sub-language encrusted with linguistic conventions, some of which still serve a useful purpose, some of which do not. School textbooks frequently show us these sub-languages at their worst. There is room for some useful study here which would go much deeper than readability studies usually do. (Note the ill-defined journalism of school history and geography textbooks.)

The psychological aspects of learning this language need to be explored. Vygotski maintains that the anslysis of reality with the help of concepts precedes the analysis of the concepts themselves. Thus the contrast between the adolescent's ability to form and use a concept and his relative inability to verbalize it. Vygotski's exploration of the relationship between spontaneous

and non-spontaneous concepts could help us here. Come to think of it, the whole of "Language and Thought" would be a fine starting point for understanding the psychological difficulty of "impersonal" language. We need to arm ourselves theoretically against those who tell us that all we need do in some odd half-hour or so is to teach the students how to write simple prose so that they can get on with the business of learning chemistry or geography.

But the verbalization of concepts within different subjects has a complex history; it is probably not a simple matter of perfectly evolved language which embodies one kind of rational thought. The models we look at are social institutions and the differences between, say, the language of geology and the language of history must be in part due to the different history of these two subjects. My feeling is that the difficulty which students face is not simply the difficulty of a certain level of conceptualization but also of more hidden features. In all events we should set about distinguishing between the linguistic-conventional and the linguistic-intellectual, so that we can understand that traditional formulations are not sacrosanct. (Is there only one possible version of Boyle's Law?)

For many pupils school is the only arena for access to certain kinds of verbalized thought and certain activities which give rise to them. The more deeply a subject is penetrated the further away its <u>public</u> verbalization grows from everyday speech and imaginative literature. But mastery requires intellectual struggle. How can we make this struggle worthwhile rather than despairing and demoralizing?

How can we bridge the gap between the personal and impersonal? I am sure that we rush the whole process because we have not considered what is involved. Must the two be kept so separate? Why should the full personal response be outlawed from all but the English lesson? What is going on inside pupils when they are given a frog to dissect or stop to admire the bright blue inside a test-tube or are moved by a moment of history? Of course, the whole business is made so much more difficult by the writers of textbooks who seem to have read only other textbooks. Perhaps we need more texts and fewer textbooks.

Much of the language encountered in school looks at pupils across a chasm. Some fluent children (high verbal IQ's and all that) adopt the jargon and parrot whole stretches of lingo. Personal intellectual struggle is made irrelevant and the personal view never asked for. Language and experience are torn asunder. Worse still many children find impersonal language mere noise. It is alien in its posture, conventions, and strategies. (There are some sociological criteria here which I have not explored.) They cannot mime the performance; they are not high in morale when confronted with new language experience. These are extremes. Many children have areas of confidence and understanding but frequently have to resort to disperate mimicry to see them through. Some of us went through university like that.

What has all this got to do with continuity? Firstly, we need to ask ourselves whether there are stages in the learning of impersonal language. Secondly, what relationship is there, or perhaps could there be, between the personal uses of language and the impersonal? Thirdly, should not the role of talk in this area be explored?

This last question needs some expansion. Making public depends on the conventions of our language system but system is not only outside. It must be internalized to be made use of; we must show it to ourselves first. Dialogue inside grows out of dialogue with others. This is how society penetrates our thinking. We cannot in school focus on making public and ignore the rest of the process. If we do we lose the force of alternative ideas, feelings, attitudes, and strategies.

All subjects in school lend themselves to the conscious attention to language as language, but how can we save ourselves from the folk linguistics of specialist teachers? See Abercrombie's discussion of the word "normal" with medical students in "The Anatomy of Judgment." What were they teaching? Medicine or language?

Could we agree that it is time we formulated a policy on the use of language across the whole curriculum? Could we take the first steps in opening discussions with teachers of other subjects and with other interested parties? Is there any hope of convincing all teachers that the personal response is relevant at all stages?

Yes: No--The Linguistic Education of Teachers

(I speak merely from the subjective impression; I can't give conclusions, but I am concerned to point to a field needing, as I think, investigation.)

I take it as a general assumption that the child begins school with a repertoire of interest, curiosity, delight in exploration, and learning; and that components of this repertoire which are not developed and used in the child's education tend to die--and, like other dead material, not to vanish, but to degenerate into something nasty.

I apply this general assumption to the study of English language, which for our (U.S., U.K., Canada) purposes is the natural way into an understanding of language. That is, the child brings to school an interest, curiosity, delight, bearing upon English sounds, word-formation, and certain aspects of grammar. He also has, at the appropriate level, a comparable feeling for comparative linguistics--not only experience of, but reasons to, varieties of his own language and their domains, and in many cases also experience of, and response to, differences between languages.

If we look at the output of the educational process, we find these interests still there, but, by and large, in corrupt and sometimes offensive forms. I refer for support to the correspondence columns of the British daily and weekly press; I cannot say how the American position compares.

In general, then, I seem to observe a process of degeneration arising from neglect, and I want teachers to be in a position to do something about this. But in one area the picture is different. I do not have the impression

that the child arrives in school with a conscious model of language, or a conscious interest in models, though it is well-known that he has in operation a general model. It is precisely in this area that the teacher is compelled by the necessity of teaching reading and writing. The model, by and large, implicit in written language, and therefore conveyed by the teaching of it, is that language is essentially a matter of yes-no questions, and not a matter of more-less, partly-partly, questions. Something in writing is, or is not, a sentence, a word, a right spelling, etc. The teaching of reading and writing is necessarily a prominent component of elementary education, and the weakness is that it is not accompanied by any, or by a sufficiently prominent, component of attention to the different model appropriate for speech. Central here is Randolph Quirk's conception of serial relationship ("Language," 1965). That a child has an implicit grasp of serial relationship in language is shown by some of his mistakes (as well as his successes) in generating structures. He operates familiarly with the notion that a may be like b in respect of property x, but like c in respect of property y. But this knowledge is not (I suppose) normally conscious, and nothing is (usually) done to make it conscious. Indeed, (in England) the teacher is usually himself a person who has only the writing-dominated yes-no kind of model.

This vicious circle can only be broken by introducing into initial and inservice teacher training a strong component of corpus-based linguistic study of a fundamental, not merely career-oriented, kind. I do not mean to suggest that the trainee should be allowed to think that corpus-analysis is enough; he must also understand the limitations of this kind of work. But it is work with

texts that most vividly brings to attention the non-yes-or-no character of so much in language. When we have teachers trained in this way they will work out for themselves how best to use their knowledge so as to avoid producing the kind of inadequate linguistic model now current amongst educated people. I do not think we can do that stage of the work for them.

How Children Learn English in the Classroom

Perhaps if we better understood the meaning of our question we could more easily come to a meeting of minds. Let me, therefore, restate the major question and the supporting questions.

4. How does a Child Learn English?

   a. What aspects of native language learning are often overlooked in considering the role of the school?

   b. How can the school build upon preschool language experience of children?

The discussions, researchers, lecturers and readings lead us to believe that the child comes to school knowing the syntax of some English dialect. He has control of its structure in terms of his maturity and experiences. Vocabulary may be limited as well as the manipulation of its component parts. But he has internalized English phonemic-morphemic fusion and many of the processes that occur, as tense, number, and degree, change in his sentence producing efforts. Assuming that the teacher has a grasp of the nature of language and language learning, of dialectal differences, and a positive attitude about accepting children's stage of development we can proceed to question 4b.

Let us now quickly look at the beginnings of English Education in the schools. First we believe that everything that will ever happen to improve control of planting the seeds for later skill in reading, literary criticism, poetry appreciation, drama, composition, rhetoric, etc. Perhaps the first

mechanical approaches to handwriting, word identification, spelling, punctuation could be much more quickly achieved than has been apparent up until now - but whether these mechanics can be speeded up or not, they are purely means to ends and as such should not occupy the teacher of young children.

Most children in our elementary schools and the Great Britain primary schools arrive at the school-house door sometime between the age of five and seven. In some schools they come on their birthdays; in others, children having had or who are going to have fifth or sixth birthdays come on a certain day. For many children this is their first school experience. What happens in those four to six hours of the school day? How do they learn English?

The teacher, fortified by training and experience in teaching, by knowledge of how children learn and an awareness of language and its primary importance in a child's feeling of worth, will with patience and compassion set the stage at levels that children can handle.

The children will be encouraged to talk about themselves, their families, their friends, their toys, the things they see, hear, taste, smell, and touch. They will be helped to express how they feel and possibly why. The teacher will plan experiences that will enrich their cognitive development in science, human relationships, mathematical concepts etc. In a rich verbal atmosphere they will be encouraged to speak and listen to themselves, to each other, to the teachers, and to other humans in their school living space. There will be dramatic play, painting, singing, dancing--all ways

planned for helping them internalize what they know and to formulate questions concerning the things they wonder about.

From the very beginning literature (poetry, fantasy, realistic stories will be a regular part of the school program. The day Christopher Robin goes off to school is a day just like the one they are having. They explore literature that is real or imaginary, they identify with the characters, they listen to the music and rhythm of language. Geared to their maturity, subject to their preferences, they enter the world of the printed work via the teacher's voice and skill.

But that is not all they do. If not today then tomorrow children will see their own talk transcribed into graphic symbols: What shall we say in this note to mommy, so that she knows school is over early tomorrow? Who wants to dictate a story so that I can write it down? We write "Susan" this way with a large beginning letter. I'll put a dot called a period here to signal a stop.

Teaching the mechanics of English as well as the art of English is for today. Learning the names of the letters and the sounds they represent, learning to spell, to punctuate, to capitalize, appropriate usage, and all the other conventions are subsidiary to having something to say and the need to say it. The teachers and the printed word combine to add to the child's corpus as a sentence, paragraph, and composition maker. Day by day the child will recognize more and more words automatically, will use more variety in his expression, will find real life needs for a record of what he thinks, knows or wonders about, will accept the help of an insightful teacher

who recognizes the need to know on the part of the child and does something about it. Gradually the child in some schools moves from his own speech into books written for him. In others parallel to the rich oral language climate children are immediately taught reading in primers written for them.

As children hear and discuss poetry and prose, teachers are offering them hopefully the best models available. As they look at their own language patterns they see their own spoken language.

The teacher in this school has taught English all day. From the standpoint of maturation, he diagnoses the current state of development and through a diagnostic approach puts the teaching at the spot where it does the most good, where the need is apparent.

During the first year they will have learned to read something, they will have been involved in writing expository, imaginative, descriptive, and reportorial prose and poetry. They will have read and been read to and the whole experience will have been encapsulated in furthering a literacy of the spoken word, thoughtfully expressed and thoughtfully listened to.

In subsequent years teaching is likely to become more formalized, but the components will change very little. During the second and third years the child has better command of reading and writing skills. This may endanger the oral language program; but it should not - in fact it must not. Drawing from the total curriculum including the content of English there is much to talk about, write about. One is likely to see subtle changes in the way drama is taught and executed, in the way skills for the complete speaking-listening cycle are taught and practiced, in the way language is manipulated to get the required effect; and the reasons and ways for writing something down are

explored. Literary models are provided that satisfy the expanding proficiency of the child to use spoken and written language for his unique needs and purposes.

Coincidental with the above, children are learning to spell more words, read more complicated works, expand their speaking vocabularies, perhaps learning something about the grammars of English and being sensitized to the escalating nature of our English language - that it is never finished being learned and being taught.

Needless to say as the child approaches eleven much of the drill and practice on the mechanics of English can be relegated to its proper position. Hopefully the children who for developmental or academic reasons are at a lower level of performance than the norm would indicate, will get the help they need individually. The literature program largely "heard" until the child is nine or so now becomes the kernel of the reading program. Talking, discussing, reporting, exhorting, persuading lend themselves well to self-evaluation on the part of the learner and teaching on the part of the teacher. Formal lessons still may not be advisable but the rhetoric of English is here, as it was earlier implicit in the school experiences.

This writing, reading, speaking, listening program or perhaps better language, literature and composition English program does not just happen. It is carefully planned and sequentialised. The choices the teacher makes spring from the needs of the children and are inherent in our educational systems. Tests can measure only a small part of growth and development in language but evaluation of the totality of teaching and learning is an on-going process. The

teacher of English to boys and girls from five to twelve plans carefully, teaches steadily and constantly, and evaluates in terms of the children's needs and society's demands.